

ULSTER UNIONIST PARTY

Response to Frameworks for the Future

"The documents are a cunningly contrived snare to enmesh the Ulster people into acquiescing and indeed accelerating the end of the Union and their British identity".

The documents are "so involved and interlocked that it stands or falls together. They cannot be the "basis for discussion" as no part can be amended without destroying the whole.

(a) The Framework Document undermines the principle of consent.

The consent of the majority is meaningless. The purpose of the Document is to render such consent unnecessary through a process of "harmonisation" which will lead to joint authority between Belfast and Dublin and ultimately to a United Ireland.

(b) Once again Dublin ducks the issue of Articles 2 & 3.

No mention in Document of Articles 2 & 3 and no specific wording is offered for an amendment to the Constitution. Dublin's illegal and unilateral claims over the territory of Northern Ireland will remain, they will drop only the claim to a right of jurisdiction---we will not trade-off our rights as British citizens against Dublin's illegal claims.

(c) The Northern Ireland Assembly would be paralysed and ineffective.

The proposed assembly has very complex and interlocking mechanisms, weighted majorities and a veto by any one of the three-man panel (which must work by unanimity) these taken together with the powerful all-Ireland super structures to be imposed upon it, simply render the Assembly unworkable. And because of the "duty to serve" (para.29) Unionists who opposed N/S body would not be eligible to act as Head of Department in the local Assembly.

(d) The proposed N/S body would be an embryonic all-Ireland government.

As a result of the initial designation of executive, harmonising and consultative functions, together with its ability to have unlimited acquisition of further powers, the proposed N/S body would be a third government in Ireland and very quickly become an all-Ireland administration.

(e) The Northern Ireland Assembly would become subservient to Dublin.

The proposed Northern Ireland Assembly, paralysed by its checks and balances, heavily weighted majorities and controlling panel, would be virtually powerless. Under these circumstances the effective power would shift from the Assembly to the proposed N/S body, and the Document envisages no limit to the functions which could be transferred. (para.28) Half the joint body would be Dublin government representatives and at least some of those from Northern Ireland would be republicans, so this would mean the effective control of the government of Northern Ireland by Dublin.

(f) If the Assembly collapses, joint authority would be imposed by the two governments.

In the event that a Northern Ireland assembly ceased to operate, the two governments could ensure that the functions of the N/S body continue to develop, whatever the will of the people. (para.46)

(g) The intolerable power and influence of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference could be dramatically increased. (para 46)

The Frameworks for the Future Document, then is not a true framework, rather a full blown and complete treaty between the two governments whereby the will of the greater number in Northern Ireland to remain firmly in the United Kingdom can be over-ruled and power transformed to a joint body dominated by the Dublin government.

EXTRACTS FROM THE ULSTER UNIONIST PARTY MANIFEST MAY 1996

Ulster Unionists wish to see the incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights. We are also aware that the treatment of minorities, of which there are many in this society, requires detailed study and debate. We see the examples and procedures set by the Organisation on Security and Co-operation in Europe and the Council of Europe Convention on Human Rights as possible role models which could be adapted for use in Northern Ireland.

The UUP attaches great importance to this area of our work, believing that the safe guarding of individual and group rights to be a fundamental building bloc in any agreement that is likely to command widespread acceptance throughout the community.

CROSS FRONTIER RELATIONSHIPS

Given a satisfactory outcome to the dispute over the Republic's territorial claim, we can envisage a normal relationship being established with the Irish republic, which may have mutual economic and social benefits for all of us, at the same time as assisting those who wish to see closer relations with the Irish republic for wider aspirational reasons.

The issues that are raised by these matters, as well as the territorial claim, go to the heart of the "concent principle" which must be at the core of any lasting agreement.

The UUP will be seeking an alternative to the Anglo-Irish agreement in the talks.

THE PROGRESSIVE UNIONIST PARTY OF NORTHERN IRELAND.

MANIFESTO MAY 1996

A Constitution and Bill of Rights

We are dedicated to a written constitution and Bill of rights for Northern Ireland containing stringent safeguards and mechanisms for the protection of individuals, associations and minorities.

DEMOCRATIC RIGHT

We defend the right of anyone or group to seek constitutional change by democratic, legitimate and peaceful means.

We recognise and respect the rights and aspirations of all those who abide by the law regardless of religious, cultural, national or political inclinations.

There must be no dilution of the democratic procedure through which the rights of self-determination of the people of Northern Ireland are guaranteed.

CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION

Structures should be devised whereby elected representatives, North and South could work voluntarily together, without interference in each other's internal affairs, for the economic betterment and the fostering of good neighbourly relations between both parts of Ireland.

CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

We believe that there must be a process of conflict transformation which restates the nature of our disagreements in a way which recognises the concerns of all parties.

If the conflict can be transformed in this way it allows respect for diversity and a possibility of resolution, and is the necessary condition for the restoration of local autonomy, even if it may be impractical to resolve all differences.

COMMUNITY POLITICS

The PUP are wholly committed:-

- (a) The development of peaceful community relations;
- (b) To educate where necessary;
- (c) To politicise universally;
- (d) To promote participative democracy

(e) To encourage community initiatives providing co-operative endeavours as alternatives to managerial social services and a profit-dominated market economy.

SECURITY AND POLICING

(a) We call for the abolition of the Emergency Provisions Act.

(b) A restructured policing service to faithfully uphold the law, defend the peace and protect the innocent.

(c) The promotion of community and police liaison groups in genuine partnership

THE U.K. UNIONIST PARTY

Dedicated to preserving Northern Ireland's position as an integral part of the United Kingdom.

Central Objective: Maintenance of the Union and resistance to any expansion of the role of the Irish Republic in the internal affairs of Northern Ireland.

Present British policy appears directed to "separation by consent." This party's solution is "Union by consent" and it involves three principles

(1) Active consent, not manufactured acquiescence should be the primary principle governing any political arrangement for Northern Ireland.

(2) No policy commitment must threaten parity of political, social and welfare rights between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom.

(3) The absurd policy of facilitating Irish Unity must be abandoned.

Pro-Union policy cannot be equated with either Protestant ascendancy or sectarianism.

A Unified pro-Unionist position on the talks:-

(1) A specification of broad principles upon which they all engage in the talks.

(2) What is the bottom line of the pro-Union position.

(3) An agreement that all pro-Union parties will act in concert to and break the talks, if necessary, if they believe such principles of bottom line have been breached.

LOYALIST FRINGE PARTIES PARTICIPATION IN THE TALKS

The position of the UK Unionist party to these groups is similar to its attitude to SF. They must accept the six Mitchell Principles and agree to a verifiable disarmament programme in parallel with the talks on the political track and progressing at a roughly comparable rate.

A COMPREHENSIVE AGENDA FOR THE TALKS

The fact of the Union cannot be equated with the aspiration for a United Ireland. The Union is not negotiable is the negotiating position of this party because:-

(1) The constitutional status of Northern Ireland is that it is an integral part of the United Kingdom.

(2) That status ought to be durable since there is no consent for change.

(3) Any new arrangement as a result of the talks must be compatible with that status and must acknowledge its democratic durability.

THE IRISH DIMENSION

The distinction must be made between institutions which accommodate and express an aspiration for a United Ireland and those which would constitute a mechanism for achieving Irish Unity irrespective of the consent of the majority in Northern Ireland. Institutions which avoid or circumvent the principle of consent are, by definition, a denial of the consent principle.

N/S co-operation via designated institutions must not be driven or motivated by political or ideological considerations. Their value and validity must depend on their practicality and provable mutual benefit. An Irish dimension cannot qualify or diminish Northern Ireland's constitutional status within the UK or the principle of obtaining the positive consent of a majority for any change in that status.

THE NORTH SOUTH BODY

The reason for such a body is political. There is no self-evident economic reason for it. Pro-Union people, if they accept such a body, would be conceding the political ideology of Irish nationalism. If the motivation for such a body is both political and ideological, so will its dynamic be. Nationalists will not only aspire to unity, they will have established a structural institution designed to fulfill that objective. The UK unionist party rejects any proposal based on a dynamic that will be supplied by an Irish government fuelled by a constitutional imperative and facilitated by the British government that has no selfish, economic or strategic reason for maintaining the Union.

WILL NORTH SOUTH CO-OPERATION OFFER NORTHERN IRELAND ECONOMIC BENEFIT?

There is no respected economic opinion that economic harmonisation would bring significant benefit to Northern Ireland

The Republic must balance the British position by declaring it has no economic, strategic or selfish interest in incorporating Northern Ireland within the republic.

Dublin's current position is that it will amend Articles 2 & 3 so long as the British government accept them as an objective to be facilitated. The Irish government will exchange the dream of Irish Unity for a British government commitment to make Irish unity a reality. The absurd nature of this proposition must be exposed.

DECOMMISSIONING AS A FOURTH AND SEPARATE STRAND

This proposal reflects the objective of Dick Spring to immobilise the decommissioning train in a siding while the political issues are speedily moved down the main track. This proposition would enable the IRA to retain its weapons and use the threat of violence to increase leverage in the talks. A separate body may oversee the physical procedure of decommissioning but the process of decommissioning is a political issue to be agreed in advance together with the procedures for the disposal of armaments. This principle was suggested by Mitchell. There must be no confusion between agreement for decommissioning procedures and the physical task of overseeing the implementation of such procedures.

THE FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT

The Irish government and the SDLP insisted on the Framework proposals being a specific in the proposed ground rules.

The UK Unionists rejects the Framework's centre core which is a variation of the theme of Unity by consent. The Framework formula means that the unity principle is dominant over the consent principle. The proposals are loaded towards Northern Ireland transition from its present status within the UK to an all-Ireland arrangement. It is not the positive consent of the greater number in Northern Ireland which is being sought but an artificial acquiescence to political arrangements which promote Irish unity. The essence of the Framework is a dynamic for Irish Unity and its provisions would create concerted pressure to move in that direction.

DUP FORMULA FOR POLITICAL PROGRESS 10 JANUARY 1995

EXTRACT

CONCERN: The Ulster Democratic Unionist Party believes that all parties should be acutely aware of the political downside to starting new negotiations. Failure to reach agreement brings despair and damages the democratic process. We therefore wonder is agreement more likely today than it was in 1991/92. Is there anything in the attitude of participating parties that suggests agreement can now be reached?

DUP POSITION ON THE DOWNING STREET DECLARATION

- (1) A bribe to IRA/SF
- (2) An abandonment of the right of self determination of the people of Northern Ireland.
- (3) A new departure point for Dublin intrusion and interference in Ulster's affairs.

MODERN IRISH REPUBLICANISM: THE PRODUCT OF BRITISH STATE STRATEGIES.

ANOTHONY MC INTYRE DEPT OF POLITICS QUB

IRISH POLITICAL STUDIES 1995

EXTRACTS.

ultimately what the British state will offer is an essentially internal settlemen---with a few "externalities" grafted on--- differing littel from the Sunningdale Agreement, and falling considerably short of the proposals contained in the SDLP policy document of 1972---Towards a United Ireland. And constitutional nationalism willnot demur. It possesses neither the structural capacity nor the political will or inclination to confront Britian over the question of partition.

Republicanism will have the task of selling the internal settlement or an interim arrangement which will weaken the institution of partition and hence act as a dynamic towards eventual unity--realists within the Republican ranks accept that a unified Ireland is not likely soon, if ever, but a close association between the two parts of the country may be possible. This is a scenario seemingly very much accepted by Mitchell Mc Laughlin who said that any North/South institutions must have a dynamic to develop, and if so Republicans would have no difficulty seeing them as part of a transitional process. In stressing that the process would have to be open-ended he specifically refrained from stipulating that in order for it to be transitional the British state would have to pronounce clearly that it was leaving the country within a certain time.

And in the absence of such a specific commitment by Britain, republicans are left with no option but to accept partition indefinitely. A reading of the comments of Martin Mc Guinness reveals as much.

"Our position has not changed. We would like to see a unitary state, we would like to see a 32 county republic but we recognise that we are only a small percentage of the total people of this island. The people of this island might decide on some other type of structure. I am not going to oppose it. I might oppose it politically but there is no way I would defend anybody's right to use armed force to go against the democratic wish of the people of this island" (Teolis 1994)

That the people of Ireland have the right to decide on an option outside of a unitary state was made possible by the crucial concession from Republicanism, as articulated by Adams, that not only had the people of Ireland the right to national self-determination but had also the right to choose how to exercise national self-determination (O'Brien 1993;p 275) Once this has

been conceded, as Mansergh has argued, that right can legitimately be exercised when a people together agree to institutions that fall short of full independence or a change of sovereignty.

The British state by consistently exploiting the structural limitations Republicans faced as a result of partition, and by conceding enough of an "Irish dimension" to satisfy constitutional nationalism, has ensured that republicanism would never hegemonise the nationalist constituency.

Republicans, rather than continue with an armed struggle for another twenty years which may have proved able "to obtain compromise at the margins but not at the centre of the disputed object", have succumbed to the pressures generated by the massive array of forces and structural obstacles confronting them, and are prepared to settle for a compromise considerably short of their public "Brits out" position.

Northern Ireland, "because of its complex, dense and overlapping history will remain 'British', but with an increasing 'Irish dimension' (Patterson 1989). Despite the volubility of the Republican discourse in continuing to oppose the constitutional guarantee, republicans have been locked into a political vice, the handle of which is in the firm grip of the British state. And it is not about to relax its grip.